

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# All THE YEAR Round

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## THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

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CHAPTER XLV. THERE SHALL NOT BE  
ANOTHER WORD ABOUT IT.

EARLY in October the duke was at Matching with his daughter, and Phineas Finn and his wife were both with them. On the day after they parted at Ischl the first news respecting Prime Minister had reached him—namely, that his son's horse had not won the race. This would not have annoyed him at all, but that the papers which he read contained some vague charge of swindling against somebody, and hinted that Lord Silverbridge had been a victim. Even this would not have troubled him—might in some sort have comforted him—were it not made evident to him that his son had been closely associated with swindlers in these transactions. If it were a mere question of money, that might be settled without difficulty. Even though the sum lost might have grown out of what he might have expected into some few thousands, still he would bear it without a word, if only he could separate his boy from bad companions. Then came Mr. Moreton's letter telling the whole.

At the meeting which took place between Silverbridge and his father's agent at Carlton Terrace it was settled that Mr. Moreton should write the letter. Silverbridge tried and found that he could not do it. He did not know how to humiliate himself sufficiently, and yet could not keep himself from making attempts to prove that according to all recognised chances his bets had been good bets.

Mr. Moreton was better able to accomplish the task. He knew the duke's mind.

A very large discretion had been left in Mr. Moreton's hands in regard to moneys which might be needed on behalf of that dangerous heir—so large that he had been able to tell Lord Silverbridge that if the money was in truth lost according to Jockey Club rules, it should all be forthcoming on the settling day—certainly without assistance from Messrs. Comfort and Criball. The duke had been nervously afraid of such men of business as Comfort and Criball, and from the earliest days of his son's semi-manhood had been on his guard against them. Let any sacrifice be made so that his son might be kept clear from Comforts and Criballs. To Mr. Moreton he had been very explicit. His own pecuniary resources were so great that they could bear some ravaging without serious detriment. It was for his son's character and standing in the world, for his future respectability and dignity, that his fears were so keen, and not for his own money. By one so excitable, so fond of pleasure as Lord Silverbridge, some ravaging would probably be made. Let it be met by ready money. Such had been the duke's instructions to his own trusted man of business, and, acting on these instructions, Mr. Moreton was able to tell the heir that the money should be forthcoming.

Mr. Moreton, after detailing the extent and the nature of the loss, and the steps which he had decided upon taking, went on to explain the circumstances as best he could. He had made some enquiry, and felt no doubt that a gigantic swindle had been perpetrated by Major Tifto and others. The swindle had been successful. Mr. Moreton had consulted certain gentlemen of high character versed in affairs of the

turf. He mentioned Mr. Lupton among others—and had been assured that though the swindle was undoubted, the money had better be paid. It was thought to be impossible to connect the men who had made the bets with the perpetrators of the fraud; and if Lord Silverbridge were to abstain from paying his bets because his own partner had ruined the animal which belonged to them jointly, the feeling would be against him rather than in his favour. In fact, the Jockey Club could not sustain him in such refusal. Therefore the money would be paid. Mr. Moreton, with some expressions of doubt, trusted that he might be thought to have exercised a wise discretion. Then he went on to express his own opinion in regard to the lasting effect which the matter would have upon the young man. "I think," said he, "that his lordship is heartily sickened of racing, and that he will never return to it."

The duke was of course very wretched when these tidings first reached him. Though he was a rich man, and of all men the least careful of his riches, still he felt that seventy thousand pounds was a large sum of money to throw away among a nest of swindlers. And then it was excessively grievous to him that his son should have been mixed up with such men. Wishing to screen his son, even from his own anger, he was careful to remember that the promise made that Tifto should be dismissed was not to take effect till after this race had been run. There had been no deceit in that. But then Silverbridge had promised that he would not "plunge." There are, however, promises which from their very nature may be broken without falsehood. Plunging is a doubtful word, and the path down to it, like all doubtful paths—is slippery and easy! If that assurance with which Mr. Moreton ended his letter could only be made true, he could bring himself to forgive even this offence. The boy must be made to settle himself in life. The duke resolved that his only revenge should be to press on that marriage with Mabel Grex.

At Coblenz, on their way home, the duke and his daughter were caught up by Mr. and Mrs. Finn, and the matter of the young man's losses was discussed. Phineas had heard all about it, and was loud in denunciations against Tifto, Captain Green, Gilbert Villiers, and others whose names had reached him. The money, he thought,

should never have been paid. The duke however declared that the money would not cause a moment's regret, if only the whole thing could be got rid of at that cost. It had reached Finn's ears that Tifto was already at loggerheads with his associates. There was some hope that the whole thing might be brought to light by this means. For all that the duke cared nothing. If only Silverbridge and Tifto could for the future be kept apart, as far as he and his were concerned good would have been done rather than harm. While they were in this way together on the Rhine it was decided that, very soon after their return to England, Phineas and Mrs. Finn should go down to Matching.

When the duke arrived in London his sons were not there. Gerald had gone back to Oxford, and Silverbridge had merely left an address. Then his sister wrote him a very short letter. "Papa will be so glad if you will come to Matching. Do come." Of course he came, and presented himself some few days after the duke's arrival.

But he dreaded this meeting with his father, which, however, let it be postponed for ever so long, must come at last. In reference to this he made a great resolution—that he would go instantly as soon as he might be sent for. When the summons came he started; but, though he was by courtesy an earl, and by fact was not only a man but a member of Parliament, though he was half engaged to marry one young lady, and ought to have been engaged to marry another, though he had come to an age at which Pitt was a great minister and Pope a great poet, still his heart was in his boots, as a schoolboy's might be, when he was driven up to the house at Matching.

In two minutes, before he had washed the dust from his face and hands, he was with his father.

"I am glad to see you, Silverbridge," said the duke, putting out his hand.

"I hope I see you well, sir."

"Fairly well, thank you. Travelling, I think, agrees with me. I miss, not my comforts, but a certain knowledge of how things are going on, which comes to us, I think, through our skins when we are at home. A feeling of absence pervades me; otherwise I like it. And you? what have you been doing?"

"Shooting a little," said Silverbridge in a mooncalf tone.

"Shooting a great deal, if what I see in

the newspapers be true about Mr. Reginald Dobbes and his party. I presume it is a religion to offer up hecatombs to the autumnal gods, who must surely take a keener delight in blood and slaughter than those bloodthirsty gods of old."

"You should talk to Gerald about that, sir."

"Has Gerald been so great at his sacrifices? How will that suit with Plato? What does Mr. Simcox say?"

"Of course they were all to have a holiday just at that time. But Gerald is reading. I fancy that Gerald is clever."

"And he is a great Nimrod?"

"As to hunting."

"Nimrod, I fancy, got his game in any way that he could compass it. I do not doubt but that he trapped foxes."

"With a rifle at deer, say for four hundred yards, I would back Gerald against any man of his age in England or Scotland."

"As for backing, Silverbridge, do not you think that we had better have done with that?" This was said hardly in a tone of reproach, with something even of banter in it; and as the question was asked the duke was smiling. But in a moment all that sense of joyousness, which the young man had felt in singing his brother's praises, was expelled. His face fell, and he stood before his father almost like a culprit. "We might as well have it out about this racing," continued the duke. "Something has to be said about it. You have lost an enormous sum of money."

The duke's tone in saying this became terribly severe; such at least was its sound in his son's ears. He did not mean to be severe; but when he did speak of that which displeased him his voice naturally assumed that tone of indignation with which in days of yore he had been wont to denounce the public extravagance of his opponents in the House of Commons. The father paused, but the son could not speak at the moment.

"And worse than that," continued the duke, "you have lost it in as bad company as you could have found had you picked all England through."

"Mr. Lupton, and Sir Henry Playfair, and Lord Stirling were in the room when the bets were made."

"Were the gentlemen you name concerned with Major Tifto?"

"No, sir."

"Who can tell with whom he may be

in a room? Though rooms of that kind are, I think, best avoided." Then the duke paused again, but Silverbridge was now sobbing so that he could hardly speak. "I am sorry that you should be so grieved," continued the father; "but such delights cannot, I think, lead to much real joy."

"It is for you, sir," said the son, rubbing his eyes with the hand which supported his head.

"My grief in the matter might soon be cured."

"How shall I cure it? I will do anything to cure it."

"Let Major Tiffo and the horses go."

"They are gone," said Silverbridge energetically, jumping from his chair as he spoke. "I will never own a horse again, or a part of a horse. I will have nothing more to do with races. You will believe me?"

"I will believe anything that you tell me."

"I won't say I will not go to another race, because—"

"No, no. I would not have you hamper yourself, nor shall you bind yourself by any further promises. You have done with racing."

"Indeed, indeed, I have, sir."

Then the father came up to the son, and put his arms round the young man's shoulders, and embraced him. "Of course it made me unhappy."

"I knew it would."

"But if you are cured of this evil, the money is nothing. What is it all for but for you and your brother and sister? It was a large sum, but that shall not grieve me. The thing itself is so dangerous that, if with that much of loss we can escape, I will think that we have made not a bad market. Who owns the horse now?"

"The horses shall be sold."

"For anything they may fetch so that we may get clear of this dirt. And the major?"

"I know nothing of him. I have not seen him since that day."

"Has he claims on you?"

"Not a shilling. It is all the other way."

"Let it go then. Be quit of him, however it may be. Send a messenger, so that he may understand that you have abandoned racing altogether. Mr. Moreton might perhaps see him."

That his father should forgive so readily,

and yet himself suffer so deeply, affected the son's feelings so strongly that for a time he could hardly repress his sobs. "And now there shall not be a word more said about it," said the duke suddenly.

Silverbridge in his confusion could make no answer.

"There shall not be another word said about it," said the duke again. "And now what do you mean to do with yourself immediately?"

"I'll stay here, sir, as long as you do. Finn, and Warburton, and I have still a few coverts to shoot."

"That's a good reason for staying anywhere."

"I meant that I would remain while you remained, sir."

"That at any rate is a good reason, as far as I am concerned. But we go to Custins next week."

"There's a deal of shooting to be done at Gatherum," said the heir.

"You speak of it as if it were the business of your life—on which your bread depended."

"One can't expect game to be kept up if nobody goes to shoot it."

"Can't one? I didn't know. I should have thought that the less was shot the more there would be to shoot; but I am ignorant in such matters." Silverbridge then broke forth into a long explanation as to coverts, gamekeepers, poachers, breeding, and the expectations of the neighbourhood at large, in the middle of which he was interrupted by the duke. "I am afraid, my dear boy, that I am too old to learn. But, as it is so manifestly a duty, go and perform it like a man. Who will go with you?"

"I will ask Mr. Finn to be one."

"He will be very hard upon you in the way of politics."

"I can answer him better than I can you, sir. Mr. Lupton said he would come for a day or two. He'll stand to me."

After that his father stopped him as he was about to leave the room. "One word more, Silverbridge. Do you remember what you were saying, when you walked down to the House with me from your club that night?" Silverbridge remembered very well what he had said. He had undertaken to ask Mabel Grex to be his wife, and had received his father's ready approval to the proposition. But at this moment he was unwilling to refer to that matter. "I have thought about it very much since that," said the duke. "I may say that I

have been thinking of it every day. If there were anything to tell me, you would let me know; would you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then there is nothing to be told? I hope you have not changed your mind."

Silverbridge paused a moment, trusting that he might be able to escape the making of any answer; but the duke evidently intended to have an answer. "It appeared to me, sir, that it did not seem to suit her," said the hardly-driven young man. He could not now say that Mabel had shown a disposition to reject his offer, because, as they had been sitting by the brookside at Killancodlem, even he, with all his self-diffidence, had been forced to see what were her wishes. Her confusion, and too evident despair when she heard of the offer to the American girl, had plainly told her tale. He could not now plead to his father that Mabel Grex would refuse his offer. But his self-defence, when first he found that he had lost himself in love for the American, had been based on that idea. He had done his best to make Mabel understand him. If he had not actually offered to her, he had done the next thing to it. And he had run after her, till he was ashamed of such running. She had given him no encouragement; and therefore he had been justified. No doubt he must have been mistaken; that he now perceived; but still he felt himself to be justified. It was impossible that he should explain all this to his father. One thing he certainly could not say—just at present. After his folly in regard to those heavy debts he could not at once risk his father's renewed anger, by proposing to him an American daughter-in-law. That must stand over, at any rate till the girl had accepted him positively. "I am afraid it won't come off, sir," he said at last.

"Then I am to presume that you have changed your mind?"

"I told you when we were speaking of it that I was not confident."

"She has not—"

"I can't explain it all, sir, but I fear it won't come off."

Then the duke, who had been sitting, got up from his chair, and, with his back to the fire, made a final little speech.

"We decided just now, Silverbridge, that nothing more should be said about that unpleasant racing business, and nothing more shall be said by me. But you must not be surprised if I am anxious to see you settled in life. No

young man could be more bound by duty to marry early than you are. In the first place you have to repair the injury done by my inaptitude for society. You have explained to me that it is your duty to have the Barsetsire coverts properly shot, and I have acceded to your views. Surely it must be equally your duty to see your Barsetsire neighbours. And you are a young man every feature of whose character would be improved by matrimony. As far as means are concerned you are almost as free to make arrangements as though you were already the head of the family."

"No, sir."

"I could never bring myself to dictate to a son in regard to his choice of a wife. But I will own that when you told me that you had chosen I was much gratified. Try again, when you are pausing amidst your sacrifices at Gatherum, and think whether that be possible. If it be not, still I would wish you to bear in mind what is my idea as to your duty."

Silverbridge said that he would bear this in mind, and then escaped from the room.

#### CHAPTER XLVI. LADY MARY'S DREAM.

WHEN the duke and his daughter reached Custins they found a large party assembled, and were somewhat surprised at the crowd. Lord and Lady Nidderdale were there, which might have been expected as they were part of the family. With Lord Popplecourt had come his recent friend, Adolphus Longstaff; that too might have been natural. Mr. and Miss Boncassen were there also, who at this moment were quite strangers to the duke; and Mr. Lupton. The duke also found Lady Chiltern, whose father-in-law had more than once sat in the same cabinet with himself; and Mr. Monk, who was generally spoken of as the head of the coming Liberal Government; and Lady Adelaide and Flora FitzHoward, the still unmarried but not very juvenile daughters of the Duke of St. Bungay. These with a few others made a large party, and rather confused the duke, who had hardly reflected that discreet and profitable love-making was more likely to go on among numbers, than if the two young people were thrown together with no other companions.

Lord Popplecourt had been made to understand what was expected of him, and after some hesitation had submitted him-

self to the conspiracy. There would not be less at any rate than two hundred thousand pounds; and the connection would be made with one of the highest families in Great Britain. Though Lady Cantrip had said very few words, those words had been expressive; and the young bachelor peer had given in his adhesion. Some vague half-defined tale had been told him—not about Tregear, as Tregear's name had not been mentioned, but respecting some dream of a young man who had flitted across the girl's path during her mother's lifetime. "All girls have such dreams," Lady Cantrip had suggested. Whereupon Lord Popplecourt said that he supposed it was so. "But a softer, purer, more-unsullied flower never waited on its stalk till proper fingers should come to pluck it," said Lady Cantrip, rising to unaccustomed poetry on behalf of her friend the duke. Lord Popplecourt accepted the poetry, and was ready to do his best to pluck the flower.

Soon after the duke's arrival Lord Popplecourt found himself in one of the drawing-rooms with Lady Cantrip and his proposed father-in-law. A hint had been given him that he might as well be home early from shooting, so as to be in the way. As the hour in which he was to make himself specially agreeable, both to the father and to the daughter, had drawn nigh, he became somewhat nervous, and now, at this moment, was not altogether comfortable. Though he had been concerned in no such matter before, he had an idea that love was a soft kind of thing which ought to steal on one unawares and come and go without trouble. In his case it came upon him with a rough demand for immediate hard work. He had not previously thought that he was to be subjected to such labours, and at this moment almost resented the interference with his ease. He was already a little angry with Lady Cantrip, but, at the same time, felt himself to be so much in subjection to her that he could not rebel.

The duke himself, when he saw the young man, was hardly more comfortable. He had brought his daughter to Custins, feeling that it was his duty to be with her; but he would have preferred to leave the whole operation to the care of Lady Cantrip. He hardly liked to look at the fish whom he wished to catch for his daughter. Whenever this aspect of affairs presented itself to him, he would endeavour to console himself by remembering the past

success of a similar transaction. He thought of his own first interview with his wife. "You have heard," he had said, "what our friends wish." She had pouted her lips, and when gently pressed had at last muttered, with her shoulder turned to him, that she supposed it was to be so. Very much more coercion had been used to her, than either himself or Lady Cantrip had dared to apply to his daughter. He did not think that his girl in her present condition of mind would signify to Lord Popplecourt that "she supposed it was to be so." Now that the time for the transaction was present he felt almost sure it would never be transacted. But still he must go on with it. Were he now to abandon his scheme, would it not be tantamount to abandoning everything? So he wreathed his face in smiles—or made some attempt at it—as he greeted the young man.

"I hope you and Lady Mary had a pleasant journey abroad," said Lord Popplecourt. Lord Popplecourt, being aware that he had been chosen as a son-in-law, felt himself called upon to be familiar as well as pleasant. "I often thought of you and Lady Mary, and wondered what you were about."

"We were visiting lakes and mountains, churches and picture galleries, cities and salt-mines," said the duke.

"Does Lady Mary like that sort of thing?"

"I think she was pleased with what she saw."

"She has been abroad a great deal before, I believe. It depends so much on whom you meet when abroad."

This was unfortunate, because it recalled Tregear to the duke's mind. "We saw very few people whom we knew," he said.

"I have been shooting in Scotland with Silverbridge, and Gerald, and Reginald Dobbes, and Nidderdale, and that fellow Tregear, who is so thick with Silverbridge."

"Indeed!"

"I'm told that Lord Gerald is going to be the great shot of his day," said Lady Cantrip.

"It is a distinction," said the duke bitterly.

"He did not beat me by so much," continued Popplecourt. "I think Tregear did the best with his rifle. One morning he potted three. Dobbes was disgusted. He hated Tregear."

"Isn't it stupid, half-a-dozen men getting together in that way?" asked Lady Cantrip.

"Nidderdale is always jolly."

"I am glad to hear that," said the mother-in-law.

"And Gerald is a regular brick." The duke bowed. "Silverbridge used always to be going off to Killancodlem, where there were a lot of ladies. He is very sweet, you know, on this American girl whom you have here." Again the duke winced. "Dobbes is awfully good as to making out the shooting, but then he is a tyrant. Nevertheless I agree with him, if you mean to do a thing you should do it."

"Certainly," said the duke. "But you should make up your mind first whether the thing is worth doing."

"Just so," said Popplecourt. "And as grouse and deer together are about the best things out, most of us made up our minds that it was worth doing. But that fellow Tregear would argue it out. He said a gentleman oughtn't to play billiards as well as a marker."

"I think he was right," said the duke.

"Do you know Mr. Tregear, Duke?"

"I have met him—with my son."

"Do you like him?"

"I have seen very little of him."

"I cannot say I do. He thinks so much of himself. Of course he is very intimate with Silverbridge, and that is all that anyone knows of him." The duke bowed almost haughtily, though why he bowed he could hardly have explained to himself. Lady Cantrip bit her lips in disgust. "He's just the fellow," continued Popplecourt, "to think that some princess has fallen in love with him." Then the duke left the room.

"You had better not talk to him about Mr. Tregear," said Lady Cantrip.

"Why not?"

"I don't know whether he approves of the intimacy between him and Lord Silverbridge."

"I should think not; a man without any position or a shilling in the world."

"The duke is peculiar. If a subject is distasteful to him he does not like it to be mentioned. You had better not mention Mr. Tregear." Lady Cantrip, as she said this, blushed inwardly at her own hypocrisy.

It was of course contrived at dinner that Lord Popplecourt should take out Lady Mary. It is impossible to discover

how such things get wind, but there was already an idea prevalent at Custins that Lord Popplecourt had matrimonial views, and that these views were looked upon favourably. "You may be quite sure of it, Mr. Lupton," Lady Adelaide Fitz-Howard had said. "I'll make a bet they're married before this time next year."

"It will be a terrible case of Beauty and the Beast," said Lupton.

Lady Chiltern had whispered a suspicion of the same kind, and had expressed a hope that the lover would be worthy of the girl. And Dolly Longstaff had chaffed his friend Popplecourt on the subject, Popplecourt having laid himself open by indiscreet allusions to Dolly's love for Miss Boncassen. "Everybody can't have it as easily arranged for him as you; a duke's daughter and a pot of money without so much as the trouble of asking for it."

"What do you know about the duke's daughter?"

"That's what it is to be a lord and not to have a father."

Popplecourt tried to show that he was disgusted; but he felt himself all the more strongly bound to go on with his project.

It was therefore a matter of course that these should-be lovers would be sent out of the room together. "You'll give your arm to Mary," Lady Cantrip said, dropping the ceremonial prefix. Lady Mary of course went out as she was bidden. Though everybody else knew it, no idea of what was intended had yet come across her mind.

The should-be lover immediately reverted to the Austrian tour, expressing a hope that his neighbour had enjoyed herself. "There is nothing I like so much myself," said he, remembering some of the duke's words, "as mountains, cities, salt mines, and all that kind of thing; there's such a lot of interest about it."

"Did you ever see a salt mine?"

"Well, not exactly a salt mine; but I have coal mines on my property in Staffordshire. I'm very fond of coal. I hope you like coal."

"I like salt a great deal better—to look at."

"But which do you think pays best? I don't mind telling you—though it's a kind of thing I never talk about to strangers—the royalties from the Blogownie and Toodlem mines go up regularly two thousand pounds every year."

"I thought we were talking about what was pretty to look at."

"So we were. I am as fond of pretty things as anybody. Do you know Reginald Dobbes?"

"No, I don't. Is he pretty?"

"He used to be so angry with Silverbridge because Silverbridge would say Crummie-Toddie was ugly."

"Was Crummie-Toddie ugly?"

"Just a plain house on a moor."

"That sounds ugly."

"I suppose your family like pretty things."

"I hope so."

"I do, I know." Lord Popplecourt endeavoured to look as though he intended her to understand that she was the pretty thing which he most particularly liked. She partly conceived his meaning, and was disgusted accordingly. On the other side of her sat Mr. Boncassen, to whom she had been introduced in the drawing-room, and who had said a few words to her about some Norwegian poet. She turned round to him, and asked him some question about the Skald, and so, getting into conversation with him, managed to turn her shoulder to her suitor. On the other side of him sat Lady Rosina de Courcy, to whom, as being an old woman and an old maid, he felt very little inclined to be courteous. She said a word, asking him whether he did not think the weather was treacherous. He answered her very curtly, and sat bolt upright, looking forward on the table, and taking his dinner as it came to him. He had been put there in order that Lady Mary Palliser might talk to him, and he regarded interference on the part of that old American as being ungentlemanlike. But the old American disregarded him, and went on with his quotations from the Scandinavian bard. But Mr. Boncassen sat next to Lady Cantrip, and when at last he was called upon to give his ear to the countess, Lady Mary was again vacant for Popplecourt's attentions.

"Are you very fond of poetry?" he asked.

"Very fond."

"So am I. Which do you like best—Tennyson or Shakespeare?"

"They are very unlike."

"Yes; they are unlike. Or Moore's Melodies. I'm very fond of 'When in death I shall calm recline.' I think it equal to anything. Reginald Dobbes would have it that poetry is all bosh."

"Then I think that Mr. Reginald Dobbes must be all bosh himself."

"There was a man there named Tregear, who had brought some books." Then there was a pause. Lady Mary had not a word to say. Dobbes used to declare that he was always pretending to read poetry."

"Mr. Tregear never pretends anything."

"Do you know him?" asked the rival.

"He is my brother's most particular friend."

"Ah, yes. I daresay Silverbridge has talked to you about him. I think he's a stuck-up sort of fellow." To this there was not a word of reply. "Where did your brother pick him up?"

"They were at Oxford together."

"I must say I think he gives himself airs—because, you know, he's nobody."

"I don't know anything of the kind," said Lady Mary, becoming very red. "And as he is my brother's most particular friend—his very friend of friends—I think you had better not abuse him to me."

"I don't think the duke is very fond of him."

"I don't care who is fond of him. I am very fond of Silverbridge, and I won't hear his friend ill-spoken of. I dare say he had some books with him. He is not at all the sort of man to go to a place and satisfy himself with doing nothing but killing animals."

"Do you know him, Lady Mary?"

"I have seen him, and of course I have heard a great deal of him from Silverbridge. I would rather not talk any more about him."

"You seem to be very fond of Mr. Tregear," he said angrily.

"It is no business of yours, Lord Popplecourt, whether I am fond of anybody or not. I have told you that Mr. Tregear is my brother's friend, and that ought to be enough."

Lord Popplecourt was a young man possessed of a certain amount of ingenuity. It was said of him that he knew on which side his bread was buttered, and that if you wished to take him in you must get up early. After dinner, and during the night, he pondered a good deal on what he had heard. Lady Cantrip had told him that there had been a—dream. What was he to believe about that dream? Had he not better avoid the error of putting too fine a point upon it, and tell himself at once that a dream in this instance meant a—

lover? Lady Mary had already been troubled by a lover. He was disposed to believe that young ladies often do have objectionable lovers, and that things get themselves right afterwards. Young ladies can be made to understand the beauty of coal mines almost as readily as young gentlemen. There would be the two hundred thousand pounds; and there was the girl, beautiful, well-born, and thoroughly well-mannered. But what if this Tregear and the dream were one and the same? If so, had he not received plenty of evidence that the dream had not yet passed away? A remnant of affection for the dream would not have been a fatal barrier, had not the girl been so fierce with him in defence of her dream. He remembered, too, what the duke had said about Tregear, and Lady Cantrip's advice to him to be silent in respect to this man. And then do girls generally defend their brother's friends as she had defended Tregear? He thought not. Putting all these things together on the following morning he had come to the uncomfortable belief that Tregear was the dream.

Soon after that he found himself near to Dolly Longstaff as they were shooting.

"You know that fellow Tregear, don't you?"

"Oh, Lord, yes! He is Silverbridge's pal."

"Did you ever hear anything about him?"

"What sort of thing?"

"Was he ever—ever in love with anyone?"

"I fancy he used to be awfully spooney on Mab Grex. I remember hearing that they were to have been married, only that neither of them had sixpence."

"Oh—Lady Mabel Grex! That's a horse of another colour."

"And which is the horse of your colour?"

"I haven't got a horse," said Lord Popplecourt, going away to his own corner.

#### ABOUT SWEDEN.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

BELONGING, as they do, to "la race moutonnière," tourists mostly follow one another like a flock of sheep when they leave town in the autumn. For every ticket taken for Gothenburg or Stockholm, there are scores demanded yearly for Lucerne or Geneva. Forgetful of the maxim that "variety is charming,"

and heedless of the warning conveyed by "toujours perdrix," people get into a uniformity of touring; and then grumble at the tiresome treadmill sort of labour wherewith they tread on one another's heels in their travels on the Continent.

To get out of the groove last year I took my passage northward, and can find small reason now for repenting that I did so.

Sweden, to be sure, is not so grand as Switzerland. There are few mountains to be seen, and no Mont Blanc or Matterhorn to tempt aspiring climbers. Peeps at pretty country are abundant, it is true, but there is none of the sublimity which awes the Alpine traveller. Still, the forests are delightful, though not pretty nor sublime; and their silence is unbroken by echo-waking horns and shouts of rowdy tourists.

If, haply, he has not yet learned to love a fir-tree, the intending Swedish traveller should first educate his eyesight—say by laying a few lessons to his heart from "Modern Painters." Let him look well at the "Strength of Old Pine" as there pictured; let him listen to the "tongues in trees" which there will be found for him, and, if his mind have ready ears, will speak to him most eloquently; and then perhaps he will be better able than before to enjoy a trip among the pine forests of Sweden.

But firs are so monotonous.

Why, yes, and so is Margate, which may doubtless be preferred by many a holiday-maker. Some eyes may soon grow sick of such a sea of green as may be seen in a wide pine forest. But there are other trees than firs to be admired in Sweden. The silver birch, with its white bark and gracefully drooping boughs, grows there in great abundance, and in many places forms a lovely feature in the landscape. The alders, too, and aspens are generally plentiful, and make a pretty border to the trim canal banks; while the mountain ash attains a size unusual in the south, and, towards autumn, is adorned with a most beautiful profusion of large clusters of bright berries.

One is apt to couple fir-trees with bare and barren soil, destitute of verdure; but in Sweden the forests are carpeted with green, the ground being thickly covered with juniper and bilberry. Ferns and mosses,\* too, abound; and of both I

noticed many that were new to me. Stag-horn moss I found in plenty, and mostly bearing yellow seed-cones, sprouting like tiny bulrushes straight upward from the stems, which crept along half hidden by the grass. The lichens also looked most beautiful, clothing the grey boulders that lay scattered here and there, and hanging gracefully festooned about the stumps which stood like tombstones to mark where trees had fallen. At first I wondered at this needless waste of timber, as I thought it; but my surprise soon ceased on learning that the wood is well-nigh worthless if it be not felled in winter, when the snow lies six feet deep, and the axe is therefore wielded at some distance from the roots.

Flowers clearly should be looked for in the birth-land of Linnaeus; but one hardly would expect to find such brilliance of blossom so near the arctic circle. Certainly last August the gardens were as gay as mallows, roses, dahlias, and marigolds could make them; and the blooms were mostly finer than they commonly contrive to be in our own foggy island. As they live in a white world for well-nigh half the year, and when they look out of window can see little else than snow, the Swedes wisely take care to decorate their dwellings with abundant growing greenery. Flowering plants are placed in pots about the rooms (I noticed oleanders growing with great vigour), and pretty variegated ivies and other bright-leaved creepers are trailed along the walls. Frequently I found them even hanging from the cornice, and showing such luxuriance that I marvelling not when told that they had grown there many years.

I may note here that the houses are mostly built of wood, and the crevices between the timbers are tightly caulked with moss. In many country districts they are coloured a deep red by ochre mixed with rye-flour, which serves in lieu of paint. Frequently a big ladder stands propped against the front, to serve in case of fire; for, as the roofs are tiled with wood, a few sparks from the chimney may easily suffice to set them in a blaze. Sometimes beside the ladder is hung a monster rake, which is used to strip the burning shingles from the roof. Open fires are rarely used; the rooms being mostly warmed with large white stoves of earthenware, in shape like a big shower-bath, which doubtless are effective, but have not a cheerful fireside sort of look.

\* "When a friend was complaining to Linnaeus that Sweden did not afford scope enough for the study of Nature, the sage laid his hand upon a bit of moss on which they were reclining, and said, 'Under this palm is material for the study of a lifetime.'"—Smiles's Life of Robert Dick.

Tourists who take couriers to guide them in their travels doubtless save themselves some trouble, but are likely to be led a little by the nose, and are not suffered much to deviate from a well-worn track. I doubt whether Lord Croesus, if he were to visit Sweden, would be allowed to rough it in a travel across country, and be content with the rude fare which the guest-houses can give. Yet to live for a few days on fish and eggs, and rye-cake which was baked in the last century,\* may prove a healthy change for one pampered by French cookery, and threatened with the gout.

People often go to Paris and think they have seen France; and so, after reaching Stockholm, tourists straightway start off home again, and then begin to prattle as though they had seen well-nigh every inch of Sweden. If they venture beyond Stockholm they go mostly to Upsala, which, as it contains the chief Swedish university, they will probably describe as being "highly interesting." I confess it little impressed me, excepting by the ugliness of certain portions of its architecture, and the utter absence of all grandeur of antiquity, as compared in my mind's eye with the old colleges of Oxford. Such a town as Söderkypping I found better worth a visit, where the picturesque old church, with its quaint timber-proppped-up belfry, pleased me far more than the ponderous cathedral at Upsala, although the latter is esteemed the finest Gothic building in all Sweden.

It is a common thing in Sweden for the belfry to be built of wood, and placed a few yards from the church. This is the case at Söderkypping, where the beams that buttress and support the belfry are protected from the weather by small wooden tiles, or shingles. The church-yards appear mostly to be kept with care and reverence; flowers being freshly put or planted on the graves, and seats placed beside them for the use of mourners. Long laudatory epitaphs seem not at all in favour with the Swedes. As a rule the inscription is as short as possible. Brevity apparently is looked upon in Sweden as the soul of tombstone writing. The history of a life is often told in two short lines. Even the very dates are abbreviated sometimes in a manner rather business-like. The

record in some cases will stand simply thus: "Född 4/5/1832. Död 3/11/58." This, however, is more commonly expanded into "Hen wär född den 6 Sep. 1867. Död den 5 Dec. 1876." Or there is a variation such as "Här underhvar till uppståndelsens dag;" and not unfrequently the addition of a reference to a psalm, which, however, is not quoted, it being assumed that memory will supply the missing words.

Wretched generally elsewhere, the weather was in Sweden extremely fine last summer, and caused throughout the country a most unusual hay crop and a plentiful corn harvest. I heard of oat-ears that numbered more than ninety grains, and fields of better barley I have rarely seen. The corn was ripe in Sweden sooner than in England, and the further north I travelled the finer were the crops. There are no hedges to be seen, and the vales between the forests form wide waving seas of grain. In lieu of stacks there are long upright wooden stands, looking like monster hurdles, fully thirty feet in height. By means of rope and pulley the sheaves are hoisted up and stuffed between the poles, which are placed horizontally about two feet apart. Thus a yellow wall of barley is gradually built, the ears all hanging on one side, and so securely that the crop is often kept thus through the winter without sustaining any damage by the snow-storms or the frost.

In few villages in England can a maypole now be seen, and probably in none of them is it ever put in use. In Sweden, however, there are maypoles still in plenty, and there is around them no lack of rustic merriment. Only, as the snow may not have vanished by May-day, the *al fresco* friskings are wisely postponed till mid-summer. In Dalecarlia especially the old custom is kept up, as the lately-faded flowers and wreaths of withering leaves that hung about the poles in August plainly showed. *Terpsichore* may doubtless find elsewhere apter pupils than among these thick-shoed peasants; still a maypole dance in Dalarne must be a pretty sight, if but for the gay dresses and bright faces of the girls who take a part in it.

But I learned that Christmas, more than midsummer, is the time for merrymaking: and indeed the Swedes are not singular in this, for what Christian country is there where Christmas fails to be a season of rejoicing? Deep as the snow may lie, the ploughs have

\* Welsh or Scottish oatcake is far softer than this Northern substitute for bread. In size and substance it is not unlike a painter's palette, with a thumb-hole through which it is strung upon a pole and hung up to the ceiling for months.

cleared the roads, and the sledges smoothly slide along from one farm to another, or cross the lake, or gallop down the river to the place of gathering, where the tall flagstaff stands to serve as a beacon for their course. In the brave days of old it was considered a disgrace for a Swedish host to let his guest depart, not being drunk. But such drinking bouts are now rather the exception than the rule; and in Sweden, as elsewhere, men are not now scorned as milk-sops because, after a merry-making, they can manage to walk home.

The night is generally a rather trying time for timid travellers. The usually momentous question, "What shall we have for dinner?" sinks into insignificance when compared with the dread query, "Will the sheets be damp?" or "How about mosquitoes?" Certainly I spent some singular nights in Sweden, and I may thank my lucky star that they were not more numerous. To one accustomed to home comforts, especially at bed-time, it is curious to find oneself compelled to seek one's rest upon a half-stuffed sofa-bed, about a foot or so too short, and quite as much too narrow, and very scantily supplied with pillowing and coverlet. The fear of falling off the shelf is fatal to the hope of sinking into easy slumber. Still further cause of wakefulness is furnished by the stuffy smell which tells of windows rarely opened; and the terrible anxiety and doubt as to the advent of those nocturnal visitors foreshadowed not too dimly by the dismal "wägglus-bräde"—or, in plain English, the bug-board—on view at the museum of ethnology at Stockholm.\*

Of all the queer nights that I passed in my month's travel, the one I spent at Hernösand was perhaps the oddest. The steamboat thence to Gefle, on her way from Happaranda, was announced to leave at midnight, and to start shortly after. So to make sure of not missing her, prudence suggested sitting up till she arrived. Not without some trouble, we discovered an hotel, where nothing could be had to eat or drink, however, but where we found a private room, and played a game of Boston to while away the time of waiting. The watchmen came and went their way, and awoke the sleepy echoes with their clamorous announcement of the hours. The candles burned into the

sockets, and still no steamer was announced. Soon after midnight I turned out, instead of turning in on board, as I had fondly hoped to do. I paced along the quay, where the small trading-boats lay moored, and there I calmly smoked the pipe of meditation on the vanities of life. Although no moon was shining, the night was scarcely dark; for towards the north there gleamed a faint, pale, tender light. Now and then a rat ran stealthily along, or the still water was ruffled by the splashing of a fish. By-and-by the sky grew brighter, and the stars began to fade; and soon after two had struck, some rosy streaks of dawn appeared in the far east. At three the croak of a grey crow told that Nature was awaking, and soon some members of his family arrived by twos and threes, all flying towards the north. Then a flock of wagtails flitted to the shore, and a few early-rising finches twittered forth their hopes to catch the late-retiring worm.\* At length, when I began to despair of her arrival, there slowly steamed in sight the Thule—the Ultima Thule, we had christened her—just as four o'clock had struck.

One may judge from this small incident that these little coasting steamers are not rapid in their course. Indeed, but for the desire to see the noble river Angerman, which for scenery has been declared a rival of the Rhine, instead of stopping short at Hernösand I should have gone to Happaranda, and have returned thence straight to Stockholm in a fast, clean, yacht-like vessel, and not a coasting slug. At Happaranda, too, I should have been in Lapland, which, in spite of its mosquitoes, is on my visiting list. Fancy finding nowadays, within a week from London, so primitive a country that a man, when he leaves home, is careful, if he locks the door, to hang the key beside it, so that his house may be at the service of the stranger needing shelter!

Lapdogs, as a rule, I abominate and loathe; but the addition of a letter turns

\* There are far fewer birds in Sweden than in Norway. Grey crows there are in plenty, and magpies and water-wagtails; but in a month's travel I only saw one black cock and a brace of partridges, and no other winged game. Some gulls were flying about the quays and streets of Stockholm, and upon Lake Vetter I spied a brood of wild ducks. But I saw no thrush or blackbird, and heard no lark in song. Even sparrows appear sparse, although, to tempt them to multiply, little boxes are in some places provided for their nesting, and possibly to afford them a snug shelter from the snow.

my loathing into love. I saw a lot of Lapp dogs in my journey up to Liden, and their long white hair was so soft and tipped so prettily with black, and their eyes were so intelligent, and their ears so pertly pointed, and their little feet so clean, and their long tails were curled so cosily close upon their backs, that I longed to bring away a puppy-dog or two, if but to put the noses of some park pets out of joint.

I found likewise a Lapp family settled near Sollefitia, and saw the inside of their hut as well as smoke would suffer me. In the middle was a big fire, though the day was blazing hot; and a mother with her baby and a brace of little urchins in a state of semi-nudity were huddled close together, as though they had forgotten that August was just ending, and there was no fear yet of frost-bites.

In winter time the Lapps come pretty often into Sweden, to sell their furs and deer-flesh. But they rarely reach their home with any profit from their trip. According to old legends, the forests through which they have to pass are all haunted; but the bad spirit that most potently exerts his baleful influence is the wretched demon Drink. I learned that on the road between Liden and Sollefitia the Lapps would lie for hours, if not indeed for days, half-buried in the snow, and seemed to live quite frost-proof while they were dead drunk.

#### A MOTHER'S ANNIVERSARY.

Not by the seaboard that I love the best,  
Where the great waves come dancing up the bay,  
Round the Black Nab in fearless mirth to play,  
And fling white foam-flakes on his rugged breast;  
While the soft wind comes sweeping from the west,  
And the lark sings in blue depths far away:  
Not there, my darling, do I keep to-day,  
The day of days to me supremely blest,  
The day that brought our happy life its crown,  
The day God sent his choicest blessing down,  
The day that woke the sense of mother's love,  
The gifts all other gifts of life above;  
The day, when as all else around me smiled,  
Your father thanked me for his first-born child.

Ab, blue-eyed angel of our morning prime,  
Glory and gladness of our bright noontide  
Sweet comforter that nestled to my side,  
When life was darkened in its fairest time,  
And the sweet joy-bells, in their fullest chime,  
Were jarred and silenced; who to hope and pride,  
Woke my half-frozen heart; soft stay and guide,  
Up the lone path, so steep and hard to climb!  
Here, by the Southern sea, I sit and muse,  
How our first child indeed has "come of age,"  
And picture all the joys that I would choose,  
Had I the printing of her life's fresh page;  
This the best wish to frame, "her babe to be,  
To her, just all that she has been to me."

#### DAN FARTHING'S ONLY SON.

##### A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THE most important house in the village of Horksmead was "old Dan Farden's cottage." The rectory was a comfortable dwelling, the doctor's house was well built and roomy, and the retired leather merchant's was more fashionable, but they were commonplace compared with the cottage. In the judgment of any man or woman of Horksmead, it would have been flat heresy to institute any comparison unfavourable to the latter. It was the glory of the village; its quaint gardens, the incongruous surprises of its rambling mysteries, were as enchanting as a page of fairy lore. The younger folks in that rustic community, recent settlers, visitors, and strangers, spoke of it respectfully as "Mr. Farthing's house;" but if you chanced to make use of the expression in speaking to one of the older inhabitants, he would say: "Who? Oo-ay: you mean Dan Farden: oold Dan Farden: and a rum un he is tu!" He had within their memory risen from the ranks. In many things his ways were their ways; he spoke their speech; he had none of your new-fangled notions about grammar, but he could handle a plough, or shear a sheep, or back a colt, or mow, or reap, or bind, or cart, with any of them; and as he could hold his own in these things, he had held his own in others too, with singular tenacity, all his life. Though frugal he was not a hard-fisted man, nor had he accumulated his considerable wealth by any means that were dirty, or grasping, or underhand. He had always lived well within his income, even when it was no more than eight shillings a week, at which time, though he liked his "cup of ale" as well as another man, he could steadily resist the fascinations of the public-house. He had never wasted anything, and what his "mates" despised as worthless, he had a curious knack of turning to good account and converting into money. While still a hard-worked day-labourer he had succeeded, from a few chance cuttings and seeds, in propagating flowers, with which he supplied, on modest but remunerative terms, half the village. His fowls were perfect prodigies of fecundity. There was not a house for miles round that had not some specimen of his neat and solid handiwork in boxes, watch-stands, bootjacks, and other simple matters. How he accomplished all these things was a mystery that

the most daring speculations of his bucolic peers, though they consumed hogsheads of beer in discussing the subject, could make nothing of. One poor simple fellow suggested that it was because he never wasted a minute, a suggestion received with much loud-lunged and scornful ridicule; but there was perhaps something in it, for, if he was economical with regard to waste substances, he was parsimonious with regard to time.

Whatever the cause, Dan Farthing prospered marvellously. By the time he was five-and-twenty he had furnished his cottage in a style far in advance of his fellow-labourers, and had taken to himself a wife to replace a sister who died at that time, and who had till then been his house-keeper. When his boy—his only child—was five years of age, he had become foreman on the farm on which he worked, and it was known that he had a “tidy loomp of money” in the bank; so that no one was surprised to learn that he had purchased his cottage and half an acre or more of land adjoining it. His wife, a good, thrifty, careful woman, seconded him ably. Everything prospered under his hand, and many a night the growth of Dan Farden's fortunes was debated on the sanded floor of the Rising Sun with more interest than the fate of empires. It was wrong to call it “luck”—as the villagers did—when his long and faithful service was rewarded on the death of his master by a handsome legacy; but good fortune as well as high qualities must be credited with another legacy that fell to him about the same time in recognition of his having been the means of rescuing an old lady whose house had taken fire. There was not a man in the village who would not have done that had he chanced to be the first on the spot; but it was Dan Farden who happened to be passing, for, as was somewhat grudgingly observed at the time, “all the plooms dropped into his mouth.”

We are not concerned with all the details of his continuously prospering career, nor will we stop to explain, step by step, how it was that his cottage grew, by constant accretions, to be the rambling mansion that had such a fascination for the community at Horksmead. It is only the late years of his life at which we are going to take a glance, in relation to the little boy of whom we spoke—his only son.

Little Frank Farthing was not a beautiful nor a very quick child, but he was

wonderfully attractive. He had large dreamy eyes, and his wide mouth and square jaw gave to his face in repose a look of sternness that was strange in a child. But eyes and ripe lips could be eloquent of fun and good-humour, and the ruddy cheek could dimple in sunniest laughter. It was while he was still a very little fellow that his mother had greeted Dan Farthing on his return one evening in high spirits.

“Dan'l,” she said, “ay've got summet to show yow.”

“Summet good, then, I hope,” he answered. “Ay want ma tea.”

“Yow shall hev yowr tea drekley. It's all ready. Just yow look here.”

And then, with such pride as only mothers know, she produced from her pocket a much-creased piece of paper (it had originally held sugar), on which had been a tolerably spirited drawing of a dog, young Frank's handiwork, done with a bit of charred stick from the fire.

“They-ar!” said she smoothing it out with her hand, and thereby removing the last vestiges of the sketch, “what du yow think ov that?”

“Wall,” said Dan, “ay think it's a very dirty bit of paiper. What ov it?”

She looked at it more closely, and flushed with vexation as she saw that the glory had departed.

“Well, I nivver!” she exclaimed. “An' so it is. But it wor as like our Pincher as ivver you see, and our Franky dror'd it.”

“Ay, ay, missis; but don't you let un wayste his time in drorin'!” and he tempered the severity of the rebuke with a lusty kiss. “There ain't no good to be got out of drorin'. Let's hev ma tea.”

Good or no good, there was no keeping the little rascal from it. With a bit of chalk he would draw on the fences or gates, men, houses, dogs, trees, and flowers, and he would even make sketches in charcoal on the neatly-kept kitchen floor. Waste-paper there was none in that household; every scrap was duly consigned to the sack, the contents of which were sold in due season. Little Frank, however, borrowed a large percentage of these scraps, conscientiously returning them with the counterfeit presentation of the architectural, human, animal, and vegetable attractions of Horksmead and its neighbourhood. Often would he steal out with his pencil and

some scrap of paper with a fair inchage of blank space upon it, and his primer as a drawing-board, to indulge in his favourite pursuit. On one of these occasions he had selected as his subject the rectory, a quaint old gabled house, with clinging ivy and picturesque porch. The low-growing shrubs and plants intercepted his view, and he had almost given up his design in despair, when it occurred to him to clamber the fence, and scale one of the trees in the rectory grounds. Here, astride on a convenient branch, and backed by the solid bole of the tree, he had an excellent view, and soon became absorbed in his work. The report of a gun somewhat startled him, but he only set his lips close and went on with the sketch with redoubled energy. There was another report, still nearer at hand, and then a third, which was as nearly as possible simultaneous with a sharp, stinging sensation in a fleshy part of his anatomy, that made him involuntarily drop his pencil and book and tumble to the ground with a shrill scream. Before he had time to recover himself two young men were bending over him, one of whom, dropping his gun, and raising him tenderly, exclaimed :

"By Gad, Gerald, it's little Frank Farthing. I hope you're only frightened, not hurt, Frank, eh?"

"I don't think I am much hurt," said Frank rather ruefully, putting a dimpled hand to the injured quarter, and not without a sense of shame at having made so much noise over a trifle, "but it hit me."

Clement Chope was much relieved to find that no serious harm had been done, and he could not help laughing at the mingled expression of pain, shame, and alarm on the little fellow's face.

"By George, Clem," said his friend, who had picked up the boy's half-finished sketch, and was scrutinising it carefully, "the youngster's a genius."

What is a genius? wondered Frank, as many wiser folk have wondered before and since. He had seen a picture of a genius in an odd volume of the Arabian Nights that belonged to a schoolfellow. He did not think he was like that. But in a vague way he was conscious that his work was being praised by the gentlefolk, and he flushed with pride.

Just then the worthy old rector, who had heard the boy's cry, and had hastened from his study, came up.

"What now, boys? what now, boys? What have you been doing now?" This

was given with a somewhat petulant emphasis on the last word, for the old gentleman had more than once during this brief college vacation of his son and his son's friend tried to console himself with the thought that "boys would be boys," but rather inconsistently adding, "and I wish they wouldn't." "Why, bless my soul, you haven't been taking little Frank Farthing for a bird, have you?"

"No, sir," said Clem; "but little Frank has been putting himself in the way of a charge, and I fear he is carrying off some of the shot."

"Why, bless my soul, Clem, you are not fit to be trusted with a gun, upon my word you're not. Run in and tell Mrs. Corlass, and fetch Dr. Heslop. We must have the boy looked to."

"If you please, sir," interposed Frank shyly, "it was all my fault, sir, and I hadn't any right to be up in the tree, sir. And I am not hurt, sir—not much, only it startled me."

"Ay, ay; ay, ay," said the kindly old gentleman. "We must have it looked to. Are you sure you can walk?"

The boy laughed merrily, and showed that he could walk, and briskly too, thus relieving the worthy parson's mind considerably.

The doctor was soon in attendance, and found that three shots had been lodged under the skin. They were soon removed, and Frank wondered what they were making such a fuss about, for they would not allow him to go home, and the young men were despatched to the cottage to explain what had happened, and to promise that the boy should be sent home in the evening.

That was an eventful day for the lad. His nearly completed sketch was a creditable performance, and the interest it awakened in the rector, the young ladies, Mr. Clement, and his friend, and the warm encouragement they gave him, would have repaid him a hundredfold if he had been peppered with shot from head to heel. Moreover, he had the awful joy of turning over a large scrap-book, and looking at the water-colours of the young ladies, to say nothing of some really good pictures hung in the dining-room; and, to crown his happiness, when the evening came, and he was driven home in state in the rector's own chaise, he bore with him a precious gift, a sketch-book and half-a-dozen pencils. This was his first introduction to "art treasures," and

he was dazzled by their beauty, and fired with a new ambition which took deeper and deeper hold of him till it became the purpose of his life. And the ladies of the rectory, firmly persuaded that it had been their good fortune to discover a modern Giotto, continued to take the liveliest interest in his progress. They even enforced upon the rector the duty of calling upon Dan Farthing, whose prosperity was the talk of the village, and urging him to give his boy an art education. But advice is always one of those things it is more blessed to give than to receive, and the rector's reception was of the coldest. The father listened in silence to the representations made to him, and, when the rector had quite finished, said :

"Pusson, ay han't nivver interfered with your bis'ness, and ay don't want to. But ay'll manage ma own ma own waay."

And when the "pusson" had gone, he called his boy to him, and made what was for him quite a long speech.

"Frank, ma booøy," he said, "pusson has bin here a talkin' to me about yow bein' a hartis'. Thaäy didn't ought to put no such things inter yow're head. Drorin's all very well for a plaäything, leasways, ay don't see much harm in it, though it ain't no good. But yow'm got to larn to manage the farm, and to look arter the bisness, and yow'll find that quayte enough, lad. Yow be gettin' a big booøy now, and yow'll soon ha' to give up plaäythings."

"Yes, father," said Frank, for it had not occurred to him yet to dispute the paternal will in anything. Dan Farthing was not a stern man, and he loved to see his boy happy, but it was well understood in that household that his will was law, and that he was not given to the feminine weakness of changing his mind.

At present, however, his "plaäythings" were his own, and when his school tasks were done he was his own master, to a great extent. And he became more completely so than ever soon after this conversation, for his good simple-minded mother died, and the little services which it had been his pride and pleasure to render her he did not feel constrained to offer to anyone else. He made the most of his liberty, feeling that it must soon come to an end; and what with gifts from the rectory, and what with the expenditure of every penny of his pocket-money in drawing material, he had had the means of almost constant practice, improved by

a few judicious hints and lessons from an artist visitor at the rectory to whom his work had been shown, and in the course of a year or two he had made great progress. He had made a water-colour drawing of the rectory, which Mr. Chope had framed and hung in his drawing-room, and this had brought him one or two commissions, and the ladies had even taken some of his sketches to the principal print-seller's in Chelmsford, where they had met with a ready sale.

And thus the years of early manhood were reached. He had seen enough by this time to know that his best work was feeble and poor, and to feel those alternations of ambition and despair with which the ardent young soul contemplates the productions of genius. His art became more and more an absorbing passion: to endure privation and suffering in devotion to it he felt would be more tolerable than wealth or position divorced from it. But he had no hope that his father would consent to his making art the business of his life; he had no hope that he would give him any assistance, nor did he know to whom he could turn for such assistance, even could he so far tame his pride as to accept it. He was very slow in making up his mind, for he knew what he would be relinquishing. On the one hand was wealth without his art; on the other a long and arduous struggle, with an obscure and doubtful issue, in devotion to it. And yet he found himself, day by day, contemplating this alternative with more and more of silent resolve: he found himself, half unconsciously, hoarding his allowance and the proceeds of his sketches, in order that he might have wherewithal to make a start. He did not overlook the grief his decision would cause to his father; and the thought of the stern old man, left widowed and childless, nursing in stoical silence his disappointment, was not least among the reflections that made him shrink from a decision that, once made, he knew would be irrevocable.

At last a day came when his mind was fully made up, and seeking the old man in his "cosy," as he called one of the two rooms which had formed his original cottage, and a love of which he cherished, Frank said: "Father, I have something to say to you."

There was a tremulous gravity in his tone that made the father look at him earnestly before he answered, "Well, booøy?"

"I know that what I am going to say

will vex you, father, and I want to tell you that I am sorry for that. The knowledge that I should give you pain has made it difficult for me to come to the resolution I have formed; but, as I have formed it, I know you would rather I should tell you at once. I have made up my mind to be an artist."

"How long is it since yow med up your mind?" he asked after a painful pause.

"I seem to have been thinking about it all my life," said the boy; "but I did not resolve until last night."

"Yow knew what it mean?"

"Yes, father."

"It's agen my wish, and agen my will, booöy. Yow mustn't look for no help from me. Yow knew that?"

"Yes, father."

The old man rose and opened the door of his "cosy," which led into another small room of the same size.

"Look'ee here, booöy," he said. "When ay begun life, these here two little rooms was all my house, and they wasn't mine nuther. Ay hired 'un, and I wukked for eight shillins a week, an' ay knew what hard wuk mean, an' what poor fare is. But ay moiled mysen an' wukked hard, an' ay bought the house, an' ay built a bit on to 'un, an' then another bit, an' another, till I med it what it is. And when yow was born ay sed to mysen, this here little chap'll hold it arter me, an' he'll go on improvin' on it; an' when ay'm a old man he'll manage the farm, an' ay shall rest, an' ay shall hev a corner in the old plaâce still. An' now yow talk o' gooin' awaay, an' bein' a hartsis'; an' I can't 'gree to it, I can't 'gree to it. I wun't help thee in it a bit. Moind that. Ef yow goo, yow goo; but yow goo agen my will, an' agen my wish. An' yow knew what you're a givin' up: yow marn't think to throw it awaay an' taik it oop agen when yow like. Moind that. Don't say no more to me now; taik a fortnet an' think it over cool, an' moind what ay hev sed."

Frank had inherited his father's inflexible will, and he never swerved an instant from the decision he had slowly but firmly formed, though consideration for his father's feelings induced him to wait the fortnight before he announced that his resolve was unchanged. The old man received his answer without any storm of passion; but it was almost more terrible to Frank to see him, though only for a minute, shocked and unnerved, and to note the quiver in his usually firm voice, as he asked:

"An' yow'll goo to Lunnon?"

"Yes, father."

"When do yow goo?"

"I thought of this day week, but it shall be sooner, or later, if you wish it."

"No, booöy, no; fix your own time."

"You'll let Mason drive me to the station, father?" asked the lad somewhat dubiously.

The old man strode backward and forward through the room two or three times before he answered.

"Ay 'spose ay must. Ay, let 'un. But ay don't like it. It seems as if I 'greed to it, an' ay can't, ay can't."

"Thank you, father."

No other word was spoken on the subject, and the week sped away, the old man bearing in his heart the burden of his disappointment, but too proud to show it by any lightest sign to those among whom he moved. It was to him as though the solid land all round his feet had melted into sea, and the tide were rising slowly and surely, and the salt and bitter flood were about to shut him out for ever from all the kindly ways of men. An emotion, perhaps, disproportional to the cause; but as a tiny grain of sand in the eye will cause the most excruciating pain from the sensitiveness of the organ affected, so in the thwarting of long-cherished hopes the acuteness of the pain is proportioned, not so much to the reasonableness of the hope, as to the passion with which it has been cherished; and men of few hopes, and unaccustomed to lean upon the world's sympathy, can worse than any afford to have those hopes shattered and destroyed. The old man was in the position of him who had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he nourished up and which lay in his bosom, and now the spoiler had come and taken it. The week was one of cruel trial to him, and scarcely less cruel to his son, and both were at once glad and sorry when it came to an end. Each respected in the other those very qualities which made it hopeless to look for any yielding. Hence there was no querulous utterance, no outburst of anger, no reproach on either side. The stern old fellow was a man of few words, and Frank was by no means demonstrative; but through that last week, as each thought of what was between them and before them, there was expressed in a hundred small things, which no stranger would have noted, the blending of a firm resolve with an

unwonted tenderness which was very touching.

At last the eventful day came. The old man sat in his "cosy" at his desk, motionless as a statue, listening as the wheels of the chaise grated over the gravel, as the servants brought the trunks downstairs, and the movements of the departure hurried to their close. He heard Mason asking: "Is that all, sir?" and the answer "Yes;" and then the door opened, and Frank, extending his hand, said: "Good-bye, father."

"Good-bye, boooy. Yow terrify me wonderful, that yow du. But yow mun have your own waay."

"Father, you're not angry with me?"

"No, boooy, ay bain't angry: but ay'm bitter sorry. That bite me shairp, boooy, that it du. But yow mun have yow's waay. Good-bye;" and he held out his hand.

"Good-bye, father, and Heaven bless you!" said the lad; and he turned as he spoke, and strode to the door. There, however, he paused, and walking back with rapid step, clasped the old man's head and kissed him passionately on the furrowed forehead. "My dear old noble father," he said, with such intensity of feeling as he had never shown before, "do not be grieved about this. Why is it that you have wished and planned that I should follow you in the farm? It is not for yourself, I know; but that you thought I should be happy in this life. But a higher power has placed in my heart this deep, this uncontrollable love of another pursuit. And I cannot choose, father, but I must go where the voice calls me. Do not doubt that I shall be happy in this life. Were you not happy when you laboured to build up in your own way the fortune you have? and, dear old father, I hope you will enjoy it for many and many a long year. Do you think my father's son cannot, like him, endure privation in order to be true to his own better self? And, father, I shall go on the way I must go with a light heart, and a happy one, if I could only know that I was not giving you pain. Believe me, father, what I am doing is but what is right."

All this time the young man had his arms round his father's neck, and his voice trembled as he spoke. The old man did not move, nor interrupt him by a word, but once or twice a shudder passed over him, and when Frank had finished, he said:

"Mebbe, boooy, mebbe; but ay can't see it; ay can't see it. Ay dun't want to be

hard on ye, but it's bitter bad for me. Look 'ee here, boooy," he said, opening his desk as he spoke, and taking from it a roll of notes, which he carefully counted; "yow must hev suffin to maak a start with. Ay did'n think to ha' done it; for it a'most seem as ef ay war givin' my consent; and ay can't 'gree to it. Howsumdever, yow mun hev a start, an' here's a hundred pound for yow. But yow marn't look fer no more. Ay wish yow well, boooy, but I don't 'gree to it. It's agen my will. They-ar; good-bye, good-bye."

"Good-bye, dear father, good-bye."

And the door closed between him and the old man, who sat rigidly at his desk while the chaise bowed swiftly down the Horksmead Road, and over Balkerne Hill; sat there still as it reached the station just in time to catch the train; sat there while the whistle screamed, and the platform cleared itself of passengers, and the slow grunting of the engine developed into a thrice rapid pant; sat there while the young would-be artist was leaning from the carriage-window to catch the last glimpse of "old Dan Farden's cottage;" and sat therestill when the last glimpse of it had faded from the boy's view, and he had thrown himself back into the corner of the carriage to dream of the new world in which he was about to adventure alone.

#### ANIMAL COMBATS.

AGGRESSIVELY disposed animals, like quarrelsome men, are apt to try conclusions with the unlikeliest adversaries. A missionary in India, watching a huge alligator enjoying a noontide siesta on the bank of a river, saw a tiger emerge from the jungle, make for the unconscious alligator with stealthy steps until arriving at leaping distance, when, bounding from the earth, he descended upon the sleeping creature's back, and had hold of its throat ere it awoke to a sense of the situation. Of that the tiger was master. The alligator could not bring his jaws into action, and although he lashed viciously at the foe with his tail, was unable to prevent himself being carried into the jungle. What passed there was hidden from the missionary's eye; but seemingly the tiger quickly discovered that his prize was a much tougher morsel than he had calculated upon; for before a quarter of an hour had gone by he reappeared without his prey, and dashed off in another direction, and, after the lapse of an hour or so, the alligator crept out of

the jungle, crawled with some difficulty to the riverside, and, plunging into the water, was soon lost to sight.

Mr. Howe, the manager of the Coney Island Aquarium, was roused from his slumbers one night by the bellowing of elephants, chattering of monkeys, hissing of alligators, and other unearthly sounds. Snatching up a stout stick, and stopping not for a light, he hurried to see what the hubbub was about, and found an elephant in the alligators' tank, engaged in a fierce fight with one of its proper denizens. The elephant had got his trunk under the alligator, and wound it tightly round its body, and held on, heedless of the desperate snaps made by its adversary. Mr. Howe joined in the fray, and rained blow after blow upon the exasperated combatants, whereupon they separated, and both attacked the would-be peace-maker. He stood his ground, and succeeded in driving the elephant back to its quarters; but before he could get out of the tank himself, the alligator, making a well-directed snap, closed its jaws upon his right hand, taking it in, club and all. Fortunately assistance came in time to extricate him from his uncomfortable fix; but not until his arm had been badly hurt. Upon enquiring into the origin of the affair it came out that the elephant had been left without water, and going in search of some, sought to quench its thirst in the alligators' tank; and the occupants objecting had appealed to physical force.

Much less honourable were the intentions of an Irish fox towards a couple of ravens he despaired feeding near the brink of a precipice at the Giant's Causeway. Stealing close to the carrion the pair were discussing, Reynard lay down as if dead. The wily rascal's ruse was thrown away on the knowing birds. One flew at him, fleshed his beak, and was away before the artful one could get a snap at it. This performance was repeated again and again, till tired of the monotony the ravens dashed at the intruder together; one attacking his head, the other his tail. He managed to hold his own for some time, but was gradually driven to the edge of the precipice, and in endeavouring to evade a vigorous assault overbalanced himself, and tumbled headlong into the sea; the victorious ravens returning to their unfinished meal.

An ass, belonging to Mrs. Kellett of Fulwood, near Preston, was in the habit of visiting one of its kind that grazed on

some adjoining land, much to the discomposure of an old black-faced ram. Determined to put a stop to this trespassing, the ram one day attacked Neddy furiously, goring that astonished animal grievously. Instead of accepting the notice to quit, the ass retaliated by kicking out at his assailant, and for half an hour the fight went on to the damage of both. At last the donkey, seizing the ram by the nose, gave him a good shaking, as a prelude to setting his teeth in its neck, and fairly worrying the life out of it. A still stranger contest came off at Red Wing, Minnesota. Two children, on their way to school, while crossing a pasture in which a fettered horse was grazing, were attacked by a wolf. The brute would have made short work with them, but the horse, rushing to the rescue, struck it down with his forefeet, and held it down with the chain that fettered him, until his owner, who was fortunately close at hand, came up, and despatched the wolf.

A Baltimore farmer, while enjoying an out-of-doors smoke, saw an eagle swoop down upon his neighbour's cat, asleep on the top of an outhouse, and fixing his talons in her back, ascend again. The cat soon awoke to a sense of her position, and not being inclined for such an aerial trip, made desperate attempts to get free, succeeding at length in turning round sufficiently to catch hold of the eagle's breast, and let him know that somebody besides himself had talons. Such good use did puss make of hers, that the bird's breast soon streamed with blood; and finding he had caught a Tartar, he concluded to let go, and the cat came tumbling over and over, till she alighted on a hayrick, little if any the worse for her flight. Having a perfect knowledge of its own powers the cat is not given to attacking other large animals, but will defend itself valiantly, and to the death, if need arise. Not long ago, an encounter between a cat and a snake was witnessed in the college paddock at Sevenhills, Australia. After a hotly contested fight, lasting a quarter of an hour, the snake had had enough and made off, but so severely bitten that it fell dead while making for home.

At the residence of Captain Murray, at Sunghie Ujeng, in the Straits Settlement, a boa constrictor was once confined in a cage waiting the convenience of a Chinese doctor, who wanted to obtain its gall for medicinal use, an arrangement not at all

approved of by the captain's bull-dog, which manifested a strong desire to make closer acquaintanceship with the captive than its prison bars permitted. The doctor came for the precious medicament, and the boa was ejected from its lodging, an operation in which the bull-dog was much interested. No sooner was it completed than he went for the serpent, his unfriendly approaches being received for awhile with quiet contempt, which encouraged him to seize it by the head. This was more than the object of his enmity could bear. In an instant the boa started up, and with marvellous celerity caught the dog by the upper lip, and spite of his struggles wound itself two or three times round his body, till only the head of the bull-dog was visible. Before the lookers-on could bring their choppers into action, blood was gushing from the dog's mouth, and his bones were heard cracking in the vice-like folds. The snake had to be literally chopped into pieces before the release of the bull-dog could be effected.

A rattlesnake, on exhibition in Cincinnati, came off second best in a combat with a seemingly insignificant foe—a small squirrel, provided for its meal after six months' abstinence. Immediately the squirrel was put in the cage the snake sprang its rattle, and prepared to strike. A quick glance around showing the intended victim there was no opening for escape, he gallantly faced the foe. Suddenly a sickly gleam of livid white shot across the cage, and struck the little creature below the neck. Springing forward he caught the rattlesnake's tail between his teeth; there was a sound like the crushing of chicken-bones, a hideous hiss, an agonised wriggle of the long speckled body, and the squirrel was in the serpent's toils, while the fragments of its bony rattles fell on the floor in tiny slivers. The many-coloured folds tightened round the brave little fellow, the snake's wide-open jaws threatened him closely, there was another flash of white; but the squirrel, never quailing, did not let the fangs reach him this time. Catching the rattlesnake just below the head, he set his teeth together with a will, and held on until the reptile's eyes started out. Then came a crackling sound, an opening of the fanged mouth, some horrible convulsive movements; and shaking the coils from about him, the squirrel flung his foe from him dead. Then, and not till then, did he show any sign of having been

harmed; but the battle won, the gallant victor dropped down in a state of coma, to revive a little while after, whether eventually to succumb to the poison or no we cannot say; let us hope the concluding words of the chronicler of this singular battle, "It is thought it will recover," were justified by the event.

Desiring to test the courage of a pet hedgehog, Lenz set a marmot on her as she was suckling her young in the corner of a chest. She instantly raised her bristles into a sort of helmet, pointed her snout to the ground, and approached the marmot. Before he knew where he was, that astonished animal found himself attacked flank and rear, wounded by the hedgehog's bristles, bitten by her teeth, and dragged to the other end of the room, where the indignant matron would have made an end of the intruder had not the author of the mischief intervened, and rescued the marmot from her clutches, very much frightened, and not a little hurt.

Another naturalist witnessed a remarkable contest between a Java parrot and a spider, a contest he thus describes: "The spider, whose body was as large as a small bird's, dropped down upon a young parrot whose mamma was from home, and spreading its huge claws over the nest began sucking its blood. When the mother returned she naturally went for the enemy, and seized hold of one of his legs; but whether it be that legs are not a sensitive portion of a spider's organisation, or that this particular insect had an overpowering penchant for the blood of young parrots, he would not let go until his pain becoming too intense for endurance he turned on the mother, and, twining all his legs firmly about her neck, was just arranging for a good long suck in that quarter, when she gave him an awful dig in the belly with her beak, whereupon he fell over, dragging her to the ground with him. Then I shot him, and released the parrot."

Combats between animals and men are outside the scope of this paper, but one that came off last year in the market-place of Avesmes was so curious that we cannot resist giving it a place here. A muzzled bear was amusing the crowd by dancing to the music of a fiddle, having a Mr. Joseph Mansy for his *vis-à-vis*. One of the spectators, bent on mischief, set a bulldog at Brain, who received the onslaught under a cruel disadvantage. Struggling with his assailant the bear broke his fastenings, and then with a fine sense of

justice rushed, not at the dog, but at the people urging it on. Unfortunately he confounded friends with foes, and began by laying poor Mansy's chin open to the bone. Workmen armed with pitchforks tried to stay his career; but the bear's blood was up, and one man was soon limping away with a bitten knee and bruised body. Another retired hardly sure if he had one hand or two, and a third had his best arm rendered useless. Then the military appeared on the scene, and charging with the bayonet drove the overmatched brute into a corner, re-muzzled him, and led him off in triumph, vanquished, indeed, but by no means disgraced.

## SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XIII. MARGARET'S DIARY  
CONCLUDES.

"MATTHEW strove to reason me out of this wild idea, saying that it was as irrational as ever entered a woman's brain.

"I know Clarice from your descriptions," he maintained, "and I do not perceive in this figure any resemblance to you or to my idea of her. I do not say it is wrong that you should allow your thoughts to dwell so constantly upon your sister; it is natural, but it affects your judgment. Nothing is more deceitful than marble; I will engage to bring you a hundred girls in the isle in whose features a likeness to this statue can be traced. It is as you say—impossible."

"At my request, Matthew made enquiries concerning the sculptor, whose name, however, could not be ascertained; but Matthew assured me that upon one point there was an absolute certainty—the sculptor had not worked from a living model. Had the result of his enquiries been different, no useful purpose would have been served. It could not have brought the dead from the grave.

"Since that time, until the occurrence of an event of which I shall presently speak, my days have flowed on calmly and peacefully, disturbed only by those memories of the past with which Clarice is associated. I keep this suffering to myself; it would be ungrateful in me to ask those around me to share it with me. No woman could have a kinder husband or a wiser father than I have. My children are healthy and well-formed, and are a constant source of joy in our house. In feature Joseph re-

sembles his grandfather Matthew; he is bold and determined, and can be swayed only through his affections. Matthew says suffering is in store for him, because of his sensitive spirit. Gabrielle is like me, dark and rough; she has a hot temper, and is sometimes difficult to control. Their grandfather, who takes great delight in them, avers that they are vagrants by nature, as he was before them.

"I hope not," I said; "I should not like to think that they will be tossed about the world, as we have been."

"What is in the future for them," said Matthew gravely, "neither you nor I can tell. I have heard you and Paul talk together of the kind of life the children are to lead, how they are to grow up and marry and have children, who with themselves are never to leave the Silver Isle. All that can be said in favour of such conversations is that they are the harmless expression of harmless ideas."

"They are not unreasonable. Why should parents not be able, especially in a land so peaceful and retired as this, to predict with certainty the kind of life their children are to live?"

"Because, Margaret," replied Matthew, "it is impossible to set exact rules of life for this or that person, however closely allied they may be to us. The seed being put into the ground, no one can say with certainty whether the tree will incline to the right or the left; least of all can it be predicted in which direction the branches will shoot out."

"The children are of our blood."

"That is just it, and our blood is vagrant blood. All we can do, simple one, is to assist nature in the way we deem best for those we love. We are the creatures of circumstance—your own story proves it. A dozen years ago could you have foretold the present? And do you believe now that you can see the future?"

"Our future is clear," I said. "Adventure no longer plays a part in our lives."

"Easy to say so. Startling as the phases are through which we have passed, others as strange may occur before the next twelve years are gone. These matters are not within our control. At this present moment men may be moving towards us from some distant part of the world, bringing joy or woe into our lives, despite all our efforts to shape our own ends."

"When Joseph was seven years of age and Gabrielle four, an event occurred in

the isle which is the true reason of my making this record. On an autumn day a schooner came to the isle. I should have gone out to hear the news, but I had much to do at home, and rarely as the isle is visited by a ship, the event is of no personal importance to me. There are times when I seem to lose all interest in the world beyond these shores; and times also when I shrink from all contact with it, however remote. It has not been so kind to me that I should love it.

"I was alone in the house. Joseph and Gabrielle were in the fields; Matthew and my husband were absent on a fishing expedition, and were not to return till the following morning. My children came home for their evening meal; they were flushed with delight, and prattled excitedly of the pleasures of an afternoon spent among their playfellows. They are both mimics; Matthew says they have dramatic power in them, and that were we living in the world, he would educate them for the stage. They certainly possess a great gift; Joseph reads aloud with wonderful meaning, and many childish scenes of their own creation are depicted by them for our edification. Their grandfather encourages them, and frequently takes part in these amusing representations.

"'Mother,' said Joseph, when our meal was finished and cleared away, 'ask us questions?'

"'About what?'

"'About the ship.'

"'You saw it, Joseph?'

"'Yes, and Gabrielle too. We were on the beach.'

"'I gave him some fruit,' said Gabrielle, quickly, 'and he whispered, "Thank you, little maid." His voice was no louder than that.'

"She had finished her speech before Joseph could stop her.

"'You are telling it all wrong,' he cried; 'we have not come to that yet. Go on, mother.'

"'And did a boat come ashore?' I asked.

"'Mother,' interposed Gabrielle again, 'am I a little maid?'

"'Yes, Gabrielle. Let Joseph speak.'

"'He wants it all,' pouted Gabrielle.

"'You shall do your part directly,' said Joseph, with dignity, 'if you are quiet and good. Yes, mother, a boat came ashore.'

"'And the captain landed.'

"'It was a different captain from the others. He was better looking and more

gentle. He wore beautiful rings, and had a diamond in his shirt. He walked like this.'

"My boy sauntered languidly to and fro, pretended to dangle a cane from his fingers, and looked about him with a supercilious air. Ordinary captains were not in the habit of walking thus, and I saw that he intended to represent a gentleman. Gabrielle clapped her hands.

"'Then,' continued Joseph, 'he wanted to know if the isle was full of children who never grew any older. I did not like that. Did you, Gabrielle?'

"'No,' answered my little girl; 'I want to be a woman, like mother, and have two children, Gabrielle and Joseph, and Joseph shall do everything Gabrielle asks him.'

"'You are foolish,' was Joseph's response; 'men are the masters—except mother. That is why the gentleman asked us to take him to the fields, where the men were working.'

"'What occurred after that, Joseph?'

"'We followed him to the fields, and he threw himself upon the hay, and while some ~~one~~ went for Father Sebastian, Gabrielle and the other little girls and women gave him some fruit.'

"'Yes,' said Gabrielle, 'and he said in a sleepy voice, "Thank you, little maid."'

"'After that,' said Joseph, 'we went down to the beach, and looked at the boat. It was a long time before the gentleman came back. Then he got into the boat, and was rowed to the ship, and he came back again, bringing a fairy and a monster.'

"'What do you mean, Joseph?'

"'We will show you. Come along, Gabrielle; you shall be the fairy, I am the monster.'

"They ran to the door, and presently returned, hand in hand. Gabrielle was simply Gabrielle, but Joseph was transformed. His legs were crooked, his head was shrunk into his shoulders, one of which was higher than the other, his hair was rough, and as he walked towards me he threw suspicious looks about him.

"'He was just like that, mother,' said Joseph, straightening himself; 'I never saw such a man. What had he to do with the fairy?'

"'I do not know, Joseph. The poor man is a cripple, perhaps. You should not mock him; it is wrong. I have seen some who are much to be pitied. Was the little girl frightened of him?'

"'Oh, no; she seemed to like him.'

"That is a proof that he is not bad. What has become of them?"

"They are here."

"On the isle?"

"Yes."

"And the gentleman?"

"He went back to his ship. Now, mother, we have told you everything. Read to us."

"I retired early to rest on that night, and about midnight was awakened by a sound which I fancied I heard outside the house. I arose and looked into the bed-room of my children, the door of which opened into my own. The children were sleeping soundly. I went to bed again, and again I fancied I heard the sound, which resembled that of a man or an animal moving in the garden. I dressed myself immediately, and went into the open air. The night was beautiful, and a full moon was shining. I walked around the house, and paused at a little distance from a shed built by my husband at the back of our house. I thought I saw a movement among the shadows, and I called in a loud voice,

"Is any one there?"

"A strange voice answered me. 'Aye, mistress.' And a man emerged from the shadows. The moment he came into the light I recognised the cripple of whom Joseph had given me a representation."

"I am not a timid woman. When called upon I think I am capable of showing a courage of which a man need not be ashamed. This I believe to be a quality of my nature, but if it were not, there is no cause for fear upon this isle where crime is rare.

"The man who stood or crouched before me, looking up into my face, was a dwarf, with strong misshapen limbs and nothing in his face to recommend him. I saw that he was tired and in want of rest, but he seemed to be making an endeavour to conceal his state of physical weariness from my searching gaze, and to arouse in me a feeling of repulsion by a scornful defiant demeanour. He was not successful. My feeling for him was entirely one of commiseration.

"You are the man who came to the isle to-day," I said.

"You know me, then, mistress?"

"I heard of you to-night from my children."

"You were not among those who welcomed me."

"I knew nothing of you until my children told me."

"He appeared to derive satisfaction from my replies. 'I thought I did not see you among these liberal-minded folk.'

"What do you want here at this time?"

"A roof!" he answered.

"No house in the isle would refuse you shelter."

"I preferred to seek shelter for myself."

"Where is the child?"

"Evangeline? Sleeping in a warm bed, I hope, in one Father Sebastian's house. Satisfied of that, I left her, to shift for myself. This is Mauvain's property?"

"Yes."

"I was curious to see it. May I sleep in that shed?"

"Surely not there. Come into the house; I will give you a bed."

"And an honest welcome?"

"And an honest welcome. My husband is absent, but he will approve."

"You are one in a thousand," he said, in a voice more gentle than he had hitherto used, "and I thank you. I cannot accept your offer. Give me leave to sleep in the shed."

"You are welcome to the best I have; that is the worst."

"The worst is good enough for me. I shall not disturb you. Do not be frightened if you hear me move about. I am going to see whether the ship that brought me here is out of sight."

"While he was gone, I brought from the house a mattress and bed coverings. These I made up into a bed, and placed by its side food and water. The dwarf returned just at the finish of my task.

"You have given yourself needless trouble," was his remark; "I can sleep on the earth."

"There is no need," I said carelessly, in a tone of assumed indifference; "one may as well accept the comforts of life when they are within reach. Time enough for hardships when we cannot avoid them."

"His piercing gaze searched my face for the true meaning to my words. What he gathered from the mute enquiry it is difficult to say, but I entertained for him no feeling but one of pity.

"You are unlike the women of the isle I have seen," he remarked.

"There is not one who would do less for you than I have done. Good-night."

"Stay, or I shall think you begrudge what you offer. You are unlike them in appearance, I mean."

"I was not born on the isle."

"How long have you lived here?"  
"Seven years and more."

"You are almost as much a stranger here as I am, then. Step a little into the light; I want to see you more clearly."

"I humoured him, and moved to some ground where the full light of the moon was free from shadow.

"As I stood there, with his eyes upon me, I became suddenly conscious that my senses were leaving me; landscape and sky appeared to be fading from my sight. I aroused myself by a determined effort; the blurred figure of the dwarf became clear again, and he was speaking.

"There is a perfume in the air to which I am not accustomed; it beguiles my senses. As if I have not had enough of dreams! Stay but for another moment; I will not harm you. That mountain of snow yonder, with its white mists moving like monster clouds. Is it inhabited?"

"Yes," I replied, and the answer seemed to be forced from me, "by the spirits of the dead."

"A proper place for the dead. There is yet one thing more before I say good-night. I brought a child with me to the isle."

"I know—Evangeline."

"No fairer child lives on earth. She needs a home, and she must have one with a woman I can trust. Go to Father Sebastian's house to-morrow, and, if you are drawn to the child, adopt her as one of your own. It will be a good thing done, but do not undertake it if you feel you cannot love Evangeline. Promise me."

"I promise you."

"I accept your hospitality. Good-night."

"Good-night."

"He went into the shed, and I into my house, with no thought in my mind but of him and Evangeline. When I slept I dreamt of him and of the child I had not yet seen.

"Early in the morning my husband and Matthew returned home from their fishing expedition, and at my request accompanied me to the house of Father Sebastian. On our way I told them my purpose, and they expressed their acquiescence in my purpose with regard to Evangeline. Before we started we looked into the shed for the dwarf. He was gone, and we saw nothing of him on the road.

"To Father Sebastian I explained the object of our visit, and he sent for the child, saying that my proposal required

less consideration than if it had proceeded from any other inhabitant of the isle.

"It is fitting," said Father Sebastian, "that she should find a home with you, in the house belonging to Mauvain. She is a charge from Mauvain himself. This letter will explain how it has come about. Upon its receipt yesterday I, without knowing to what it referred, accepted the trust in the name of the islanders. My surprise was great when I saw the child and her strange companion; but I had no intention of going from my word."

Matthew read Mauvain's letter aloud. It was to the effect that he sent by a friend named Harold—the gentleman, I supposed, of whom my little Joseph gave me a representation the previous night—a trust which he confided to the islanders, and that he might come one day to the isle to thank his friends for their kindness. The letter was courteous, and the language that of a scholar and a gentleman.

"It is a singular trust," said Matthew.

"It has occupied my thoughts during the night," said Father Sebastian, "and I can come to but one conclusion. I have the clearest remembrance of Mauvain, and I judge him to be, in his own esteem, somewhat of a philosopher; that is a matter we generally settle for ourselves. I believe him to be a man with a kind heart; I know him to be a gentleman. The child is an orphan, and an appeal was probably made to Mauvain to give her some kind of protection. In these circumstances Mauvain is just the man to think of the isle in which he spent many happy years, and, attracted by the innocence and beauty of the child, to decide that no securer shelter could be found for one without natural protectors. It is a kindly act, and Mauvain is to be commended for it. Another hypothesis strengthens my conclusion. The child's name happened to be Evangeline; Mauvain is familiar with the fatal story connected with the snow mountain; and he said, "I will send my island friends a new Evangeline as fair as the old, whom they can protect and cherish and grow to love." A tender eccentricity."

"My daughter," said Matthew, "has given me a description of the dwarf who accompanies the child. Can you explain that connection?"

"I cannot," replied Father Sebastian; "it is the one element of mystery which perplexes me; all the rest seems clear. It is certain that there is no kinship between

them, and certain also that they bear for each other a very human love.'

"At this moment Evangeline was brought into the room.

"Never shall I forget the feelings which overpowered me at the sight of the sweet and beautiful child. They say that the longest dream lasts but a moment, and it may be that only for a moment was I unconscious of surrounding things: that the years which have passed since my childhood were suddenly blotted from my life, as though they had never been; that I was a child again and Clarice was a child, and that we were listening to the kind voice of our father, who was explaining to us the mystery of the stars. Such a night was ours in the past, fixed for ever in my memory by a chance look at Clarice's face turned upwards to the sky. So do I carry in my memory the eternal fragrance of a handful of violets, given to us by a woman in a country lane when we were children.

"It passed, and the child Evangeline was before me, gazing earnestly into my face.

"It is not that her features resemble those of Clarice. Her eyes are of a different colour, her mouth is larger, her hands broader and covered with dimples; but that altogether she brings my dear sister to my mind with painful vividness.

"I have not confessed this to my husband or our father. It might cause them to regard me as being a victim entirely to my imagination. There are secrets we keep even from those who are dearest to us.

"I was not conscious that tears were in my eyes until Father Sebastian remarked it.

"It is the thought of this pretty one,' I said, 'thrown upon the chance love of strangers.'

"I knelt upon the ground, and I knew that the men were regarding me with tender looks.

"'Child,' I said, drawing Evangeline to me, 'do you think you could love me?'

"'I will try,' she said slowly.

"'We want you to live with us; I will be a mother to you.' She echoed the word 'Mother,' as though it were strange to her. 'You remember your mother?' I asked.

"'No,' she replied.

"'You will come with us, dear child?'

"'If Ranf does not mind. He must tell me.'

"I kissed her, and turned to Father Sebastian. 'You are content that we shall adopt her, sir?'

"'It is the best arrangement that can be made.'

"My husband and Matthew also approved, and that day Evangeline entered her new home.

"In the evening Ranf made his appearance. We exchanged but few words. He stipulated that he should see Evangeline at any time he wished, and that she should visit him when he desired. He spoke to the child, who certainly entertains an extraordinary affection for him.

"'Have you any questions to ask me?' he said before he left.

"'But one. Is the child doubly orphaned? Has she neither father nor mother?'

"'Neither. The child is doubly orphaned.'

"With that he left me, and although three months have passed, has never again crossed our threshold. But Evangeline has gone to him. He imitates a bird's notes, and she runs out eag'ly at the sound.

"Joseph and Gabrielle are delighted with her; they yield to her every caprice, and with the children she is full of whims. With me she is more sedate. Since she joined our household my life appears to have undergone a wonderful change. The past seems nearer to me; I think even more frequently of Clarice than I have been in the habit of doing. Once, with Evangeline standing at my knee, I said to her:

"'Did you know a beautiful woman called Clarice?'

"She shook her head. 'No.'

"'Did you never hear the name?'

"'No; it is pretty; I like it.'

"'Try to remember it, dear child.'

"'Yes, I will try to remember it.' And she murmured the name softly to herself.

"The days pass quietly. Ranf has built huts for himself on the snow mountain; he is as much hated by the islanders as Evangeline is loved. But in some mysterious undefinable way his life seems to be bound up with ours.

"I am glad I have made this record. It has comforted me."

